

APARTHEID IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: RACIAL CAPITALISM AND THE STRUGGLES IN PALESTINE

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ABSTRACT

Apartheid has become an increasingly important framework for understanding and challenging Israeli rule in Palestine. The Apartheid Convention states apartheid is a crime against humanity. We contend what is missing from this definition of apartheid is an economic and ontological link. Although the current legal definition focuses solely on the political

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regime, it does not provide a strong basis for critiquing the economic aspects of a settler colonial state embedded in apartheid. To address this concern, we propose a more comprehensive definition of apartheid which grew out of the struggle in South Africa during the 1970s that gained support among revolutionaries due to the limits of decolonisation in South Africa after 1994 — highlighting the reality(ies) that apartheid is intimately connected to capitalism. This conceptualisation was termed racial capitalism. This article argues that racial capitalism provides a more thorough understanding of the destructive dynamics of the Israeli settler colonial project, one that insists that the struggle against Israeli domination must confront both the apartheid state and the racial capitalist system if Palestinians ever hope to achieve liberation.

KEYWORDS: Apartheid, Genocide, Palestine, Racial Capitalism, Settler Colonialism

Introduction

In June 2024, the death toll of Israel's genocide in Gaza stood at 37,813 Palestinians (AJLabs 2024). But this number does not tell the full story of the occupation, nor is it representative of the larger realities of Israeli apartheid over the last 76 years in Palestine, that noted Israeli historian and political scientist Ilan Pappé called the biggest prison on Earth (Pappé 2017). According to *Pakistan Defense*, over 5,100,000 Palestinians have been killed between 1948 and 2016 (Barmin 2016). Most people are unaware of these numbers since Western media neglect to include the larger context in their reporting on the current genocide in Gaza. Much of the narrative coming from Israel and Israeli bedfellows relies on two narrow points of storytelling, both of which are necessary to legitimize Israeli apartheid, including elimination and genocide, to control the Palestinians and claim ownership over their land and other resources. It argues first, that the Hamas attack against Israel on October 7 was a terrorist attack against an innocent democratic nation, and second, that

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the attack justifies the killing of all Palestinians, regardless of age, gender, or occupation.

However, these narratives represent a limited and insufficient viewpoint that heavily depends on a myriad of myths about Israel, designed to shroud facts about the Zionist agenda. Myths such as the idea that Palestine was an empty land, that Zionism is not colonialism, that Palestinians voluntarily left their homeland in 1948, or that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East (and therefore must be protected by the US and other Western states) have been debunked but continue to be pushed as facts (Pappé 2017; Brancato 2018). The constant vilification of Palestinian resistance and existence accompanies these myths that serve to normalise Israeli settler colonialism (Chubin and Ramirez 2020). Whether violent or nonviolent, explicitly political, or apolitical, Palestinian struggles against settler violence are routinely portrayed by Western media as acts of terror, amoral, and antisemitic. Millions of dollars are spent yearly to spread these narratives to stymie counter-narratives revealing Israel is anything but a victim. In the past year, however, we have witnessed rips in the fabric of Israel's fabricated narratives that indicate that some people are starting to question much of the misinformation and disinformation about the Israel occupation of Palestine and the killing of Palestinians. This includes the most recent ways in which violence toward Palestinians has been ignored and explained away as a rationale for eradicating Hamas. Such faulty reasoning proposes that all or most Palestinians desire to eradicate Jews and Israel.

We constantly hear from Zionist Jews and their compradors that they have a right to defend themselves and that they are the victims. But the Zionist entity has no right to 'self-defence' against people under its occupation and siege. Under international law, the Palestinians have a lawful right to resist the Israeli occupation, including through armed struggle. In 1982, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 37/47 stipulating that occupied people are lawfully entitled to resist occupying forces by all lawful means. The resolution reaffirmed 'the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle' (United Nations 1982).

Although previous scholarship has addressed apartheid as an important framework for understanding and challenging Israel's belligerent and inhumane control over Palestine, most rely on the legal definition centred on presenting it as a political regime. We argue for a more comprehensive definition of apartheid and contend that understanding the destructive dynamics of the Israeli settler colonial project requires a deeper analysis of both the Zionist apartheid state and the racial capitalist system. In what

follows we provide an overview of the concepts of racial capitalism and apartheid. Next, we situate Zionism within the context of racial capitalism to provide a sociological analysis of the ongoing genocide in Gaza and apartheid in Palestine. Specifically, we argue that the Zionist project is not only nationalism and settler colonialism as many scholars argue (see Ayyash 2024), but that it is firmly rooted in racial capitalism, and is a form of racism (Embrick and Williams 2023). Finally, we outline the dynamics of racial capitalism in Palestine and provide examples of how the framework of racial capitalism allows us to better understand, criticise, and ultimately dismantle apartheid and racism.

Apartheid and Racial Capitalism

Apartheid

Apartheid is a system of racialised institutional segregation to maintain power and control over people and resources. Apartheid is an Afrikaans word that means segregation or the state of ‘being apart’. While apartheid is typically thought about in terms of place and space (i.e., the formal segregation of public facilities, social events, and housing), apartheid laws have also included the prohibition of interracial relationships and/or marriage, the creation of racial categories to limit access to resources for subordinate groups, and strict control over citizen rights. While the term ‘apartheid’ is most associated with the racial segregation system in South Africa from 1948 to 1992, the discriminatory Jim Crow laws enforced in the United States from 1877 to the mid-1960s can also be aptly described as a form of apartheid. Misleading narratives about Palestine often obscure the reality of Israel’s siege of Gaza and military occupation of Palestinian territories, which many equate to a system of apartheid. The 2016 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 states that Israel’s settlement activity is a ‘flagrant violation’ of international law and has ‘no legal validity’ (United Nations 2016). This resolution also implicitly supports the view that Israel’s formal system of legalized discrimination and isolation of Palestinians within Israel fits the United Nations definition of apartheid — a crime against humanity involving the oppression of one group by another. This systematic oppression of Palestinians, perpetrated with the explicit intent of subjugation, constitutes an egregious human rights violation. Such oppression and violence are particularly exacerbated in Gaza — a densely populated Palestinian enclave with over 5,000 inhabitants per square kilometer.

The state of Israel has consistently implemented oppressive policies and practices toward Palestinians since 1948. These tactics included forced removal, with over 7 million Palestinians living in refugee camps without the right to return to their homes; apartheid for Palestinians

currently residing in Israel, complete with *de jure* discrimination; and a violent military occupation in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. The Palestinian people are denied the basic liberties of movement, safety, education, and are denied access to essential resources like water and electricity. Palestinian universities are routinely attacked, campuses are raided and bombed, and students, staff, and faculty are subjected to gunfire, tear gas, arbitrary arrests, and death. There is near global consensus that Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, as well as its institutionalised discrimination against Palestinian citizens, amounts to the crime of apartheid. Amnesty International (2022) condemned Israel's apartheid policies against Palestinians, citing a systematic pattern of oppression and control. The AI report highlights the dispossession of land and property, denial of economic and social rights, segregation, and the erosion of Palestinian self-governance. Amnesty International contends these actions constitute a clear and consistent pattern, including the use of violence to inflict serious injuries, torture, and death. Furthermore, the organisation argues that Israel demonises and stigmatises Palestinians, treating them as a distinct, inferior, and less than fully human. The Israeli government's actions violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, specifically Articles 27–34 and 47–78, which establish that occupying powers have an obligation to provide food and medical care to the occupied population. The convention also prohibits the occupier from engaging in collective punishment of the occupied population and confiscation of private property.

Racial capitalism

The concept of racial capitalism emerged during the South African liberation struggles of the 1970s, when activists aligned with the Black Consciousness Movement developed the concept to counter the prevailing liberal analyses that often overlooked the vital role of racism. They recognised that understanding apartheid and capitalism required a critical, convergent lens that directly addresses race and racism (Burden-Stelly et al., 2020; Hudson, 2018). Racial capitalism allowed them to introduce a stronger structural and class analysis into the Black Consciousness discourse, centring what W.E.B. Du Bois termed the 'dark proletariat' — the racialised working class whose existence challenged the notion of a universal, invariably white working-class subject (Hudson 2018).

In his seminal *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983), Cedric J. Robinson argued that racial capitalism relies on and reinforces the commodification of racial identity, reducing oppressed people to disposable objects. He contended that this commodification provokes resistance among the oppressed, as it condemns them to

premature deaths under the violent and exploitative conditions of capital extraction that exhaust their bodies and minds. Crucial to Robinson's contribution is his contention that capital can only accumulate by producing and perpetuating severe inequalities between human groups. In other words, capitalism's very survival depends on the 'unequal differentiation of human value', as Jodi Melamed (2015) put it. Robinson (1983, 2) concluded that 'capitalism is never not racial', with race being a constitutive element of the capitalist system. European colonialists used the myth of white racial superiority to justify the colonisation of other nations, claiming their conquest would 'civilise' the inferior races of these lands. This racist ideology, rooted in the belief that the white race was more advanced, allowed them to deceive and subjugate the colonised peoples under the guise of bringing them 'progress'. It also mirrors the justifications that European Ashkenazi Zionists used to occupy Palestine. In this way, racism and capitalism were inextricably intertwined, as the economic exploitation of colonies coincided with the ideological promotion of white supremacy (Embrick and Williams 2023).

Racial capitalism is evident in the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The Zionist state uses race as a tool to extract value by disciplining Palestinian life, land, and labour. This has enabled the systematic shrinking of Palestinian territory over decades, as Israel methodically seized land, and the exploitation of Palestinian labour to build the Zionist settler economy. Brenna Bhandar's (2018) research reveals that racialised systems of settler colonialism dominate the Indigenous through alternative ways of relating to and using their land and resources. This reliance on the racialised production of property necessitates the commodification of land, water, and bodies as 'white possession' (Moreton-Robinson 2015). Analysing Zionist settler colonialism through the framework of racial capitalism helps reveal how it constructs racial hierarchies to enable its oppressive control. The concept of racial capitalism encourages us to view the situation in Palestine as influenced by factors beyond just the violence of Zionist settler colonialism. While Zionist settler colonialism rightly draws our focus to Israel's racist violence, racial capitalism prompts us to consider dynamics that transcend national boundaries. Palestine represents a battleground where the liberation struggle confronts oppressive global and regional forces. The struggle goes beyond the immediate geopolitics of Palestine, addressing universal themes such as justice, resistance to oppression, and the collective duty to uphold human dignity (Dana 2024).

Israel, as an enduring settler-colonial enterprise, serves as a poignant microcosm that encapsulates many of the extremist and reactionary aspects of the global order — a legacy defined by centuries of colonialism, imperialism, exploitation, and conflict. Israel enforces a military occupation that sanctions, legitimises, and promotes attacks

on and destruction of civilian populations, villages, and agricultural resources to acquire territory, strengthen its economy, and assert its religious dominance. At the time of writing, Israel is deliberately starving Palestinian civilians in Gaza and depriving them of food, water, and fuel. Israeli airstrikes have caused extensive damage to residential buildings, food manufacturing facilities, bakeries, and supermarkets, exacerbating the challenges faced by the people of Gaza in mitigating the effects of decreased food imports. However, the issue of food insecurity in Gaza and the underlying factors contributing to it predates Israel's retaliation against the October 7 assault. According to a UN report, before the most recent assault, 65% of the population in Gaza were experiencing food insecurity, characterised by insufficient and unreliable access to safe and nourishing food (UNOCHA 2022).

Due to the inherent connection between racialisation and capitalism, capitalist settler colonial states infringe rights and freedoms that are deeply intertwined with racialised violence. As a result, Israelis employ a range of genocidal warfare tactics to seize land and boost their economy. This lethal combination is foundational to European settler colonialism. The basic reasoning behind this genocidal conduct is the belief that Palestinians are inferior, 'barbaric and extremist' beings, necessitating their dispossession and elimination. It is assumed that the Ashkenazim, being of European descent, are more cultured (less prone to violence) and, as a result, more entitled to the land (which is believed to be divinely promised), justifying conquest through any means (Dunbar-Ortiz and Gilio-Whitaker 2016: 37–38).

Reflecting on the concept of racial capitalism in sociology and social science provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the Zionist settler colonial state and its role in perpetuating oppression against Palestinians. We agree with Pappé (2006) that Israel's 'ethnic cleansing' of Palestine is not specific to Gaza but involves the historical and gradual dispossession of Palestinian land that had resulted in over 50,000 Palestinian homes and structures demolished between 1967 and 2017, over 100,000 hectares of land appropriated by Israel, and the restricted movement of over 5 million Palestinians (see Amnesty International 2017). The recent genocidal attack on Gaza has completely devastated most, if not all, of Gaza's infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, universities, homes, and businesses.

Zionism and Israel's assault on Palestine

To comprehend the utility of racial capitalism as a framework for analysing the Zionist settler colonial state it is imperative to explore the impact of Zionism on Israel's occupation of Palestine. In the late nineteenth century,

with attempts to apply scientific ideas about race, some Zionists sought to redefine Jewish identity in racial terms. By framing Jewishness as a racial category according to race science theories, Zionist thinkers sought to construct a collective Jewish identity and nationhood and held the belief that science could support the ethnonational claim of a common ancestral heritage dating back to the biblical territories of Israel (Hirsch 2009). They maintained this conviction in reaction to the antisemitic notions that Jews were foreigners and a racially inferior group that ought to be isolated or removed from Europe. To establish themselves as a unique racial group, Zionists integrated racial theories into their political ideology (Avraham 2013). Thus Zionism, a political ideology, is founded on racial exclusivity (see Lentin, this volume). Zionists believed that the best way to revitalise Jewish people and rekindle pride in their ancient cultural heritage was to racialise Jews and challenge their inferiority. Zionism defines Jewish identity in terms of nationality, which is a European construct used to exclude people through racial differentiation.

However, Zionist ethnonationalism, unlike territorial nationalism, prioritises bloodlines over birth within specific national boundaries (Ayyash 2024). For instance, Israel's Law of Return grants automatic Israeli citizenship to Jews regardless of prior connection to the country. Under Article 4 of this law, individuals of Jewish descent are regarded as having 'returned' to Israel, irrespective of any familial connections to Palestine (Erakat et al., 2021). Zionism, in conjunction with settler colonial capitalism, marginalises Palestinians, resulting in the normalisation of their dispossession and expendability, emphasising absolute purity and hierarchy (Abdo 2011: 20). Zionism's racial regime relies on the dispossession of land as the main method for creating value for Zionism through the racialisation of Palestinians. In short, the violent dispossession of Palestinians is fundamental to Zionism's exclusionary ethnonationalism, as there is an inherent connection between settler colonialism and racism.

Israel's excessive use of force is deeply rooted in its nationalist and colonialist ideologies, which are upheld by laws that justify the displacement and harsh treatment of Palestinians. For instance, Israeli law prioritises public over private land ownership to prevent non-Jews from acquiring land. This is achieved through the resettlement of Jewish individuals from various regions in occupied Palestine. Settlements are facilitated by organisations like the Jewish National Fund, which utilise government funds to construct unauthorised settlements in the West Bank. Meanwhile, the Jewish Agency invites and supports new settlers, and the JNF (which owns 10% of the land under Israeli occupation) develops illegally occupied lands for Jewish settlement (Li 2021; see Lentin, this volume). The implication here is that the Zionist endeavour is intertwined with Euro-American imperialism, serving as a form of

‘accumulation on a global level’ (Ajl 2023: 270). Ayyash (2024; see also this volume) contends that Israel’s continued presence is sustained by the backing of European and American powers, highlighting the pivotal role Israel plays in furthering the racial capitalist imperial agenda in the Middle East and other regions. Israeli settler colonialism serves to enrich European and American imperialism, which enables and sustains its existence (Ajl 2023).

Even though depicting Palestinians as terrorists is untrue, this stereotype has been so often repeated that it has been accepted as reality by Israelis. The creation of this narrative is aimed at rationalising the brutal acts of violence carried out by Israel against Palestinians, all in the name of advancing the goals of Zionism, particularly the expulsion of Palestinians. Zionists further exacerbated this dispossession and loss of life by claiming that Palestine was uninhabited when they first arrived in the late nineteenth century. Thus native Palestinians living in the area were mostly invisible or viewed as obstacles to be conquered and eradicated (Pappé 2006, 448). This fabricated narrative suggests Palestinians are primitive and uncultured people who obstruct the Zionist movement’s aim of establishing a ‘civilised’ nation. This portrayal assists Israel in minimising the cruelty of its actions in order to perpetuate the falsehood that it is a benevolent, peaceful, democratic initiative. This claim is being seriously challenged in light of Israel’s ongoing genocidal actions in Gaza. Genocide is defined by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as ‘violent attacks with the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group’ (United Nations 2024). The live streaming of the Israeli genocide in Gaza and the West Bank leaves little doubt that Israel is in violation of the Genocide Convention and has openly embraced the brutality of the Zionist racial capital settler colonial project. The British medical journal *The Lancet* estimated in July 2024 that the number of deaths from the current genocidal assault on Gaza could be 186,000 (Khatib et al 2024).

Spatial Control

Racial capitalism calls attention to how Zionist settler colonialism produces differentiation through land control. It helps reveal how Zionist settler colonialism roots racism ‘in place, designed their social conditions and cemented its structural arrangements’ (Goldberg 2014: 1280–81). Different legal methods are used to enable the colonisation of Palestinian space and land, including the expropriation of land under the guise of security concerns. Through this tactic, Israel circumvents the Geneva Convention, which permits occupying powers to temporarily confiscate land for security purposes, appropriates land for unauthorised

settlements in the occupied territories, and constructs bypass roads to link these settlements to Israel itself. All the processes of ethnic cleansing and disposability: land dispossession, fragmentation and segregation, revisionary history, cultural hegemony, and bureaucratic codification, are essential elements of the differentiating systems of racial capitalism and apartheid — a deeply discriminatory dual legal and political system that advantages Israeli Jews in Israel proper and in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In the West Bank living in the same geographic space, but separated by walls, checkpoints, roads, and an entrenched military presence, are more than three million Palestinians who are without rights, living under an oppressive rule of institutional discrimination and without a path to a Palestinian state that many have long agreed is their right. Spatial racial regulation plays a crucial role in the expansion of Zionist settler colonialism (Melgaço and Coelho 2022). Racial capital settler colonialism thrives on inequalities, and unequal differentiation of human value (Melamed 2015: 77), which takes on a spatial dimension through the creation of ‘a racially devalued Place’ (Pulido 2016: 8). Racial capitalism provides a potent lens through which to uncover the racialised systems that shape spatial organisation in Israel and in Palestine. In this context, the construction of space is guided by an anti-Palestinian ideology that results in the deprivation of Palestinian resources, achieved through the elimination of the natives, and the dispossession of their property. In the next section we discuss the COVID-19 pandemic in Palestine and Israel to specifically highlight how racial capitalism and apartheid work to systematically control, exploit, and remove the Palestinians.

COVID-19 as a Weapon of Racial Capitalism

By the start of 2021 over 160,000 Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territory had tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in more than 1,700 deaths. The corona virus outbreak severely impacted the 4.5 million Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza, exacerbating the challenges faced by the already struggling Palestinian healthcare system. In Gaza, which had been enduring a blockade, water and electricity shortages, as well as high levels of poverty and unemployment, the situation was particularly dire. The living conditions in Gaza, with limited space for physical distancing, posed a significant risk. For instance, Jabalia, the largest refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, accommodated 110,000 individuals in an area of only 1.4 square kilometres (345 acres) (Deutsch 2020). The lack of resources and restrictions imposed on Palestinians heightened their vulnerability to contracting and succumbing to the virus in comparison to the more

affluent Israeli occupiers. Gaza's exports faced near-total blockage, while imports, cash transfers, and the movement of essential goods were heavily limited. The destruction of Gaza's water and sewage infrastructure by Israel further exacerbated the challenge of maintaining proper hygiene standards crucial for preventing COVID-19 transmission. These conditions posed a significant threat to the health of marginalized Palestinians.

The Palestinian labourers who sustained Israel's construction and agricultural sectors were identified as the primary source of corona virus infection in the West Bank and Gaza. These labourers commuted to Israel and Israeli settlements in the West Bank, contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in occupied Palestine. According to Garbett (2020), the COVID-19 crisis in occupied Palestine highlighted the multiple ways Israeli racial capitalism exploits Palestinian labour to bolster Israel's settler-colonial racial capitalist project while cutting costs and displacing responsibility for the protection of workers on the weak, besieged infrastructure of the Palestinian health system and economy. Israel exploited the pandemic to further its racial capitalist settler-colonial agenda by hastening infrastructure projects that constrained Palestinian land access in both Israel and the West Bank (Garbett 2020; Williams and Embrick 2022). For example, in Jerusalem, Israel fast-tracked work on the Begin highway, with the expansion of light rail and settlement projects in the occupied neighbourhoods of Ramot, Pisgat Ze'ev, and French Hill. In addition, infrastructure and construction work in West Bank settlements were accelerated. It was essential for Israel to maintain the flow of goods, individuals, and finances these efforts. Consequently, the Palestinians engaged in constructing this infrastructure were considered both expendable and indispensable for sustaining the Israeli economy, which relied heavily on the construction industry to function smoothly during the pandemic. If construction work had stopped, it would have caused considerable damage to the Israeli economy by triggering a cascade of delayed payments to banks and insurance companies — with major consequences for the banking sector (Garbett 2020). For this reason, the Israeli authorities were reluctant to test workers for Covid before they returned home after a day's labour.

The neglect of Palestinian well-being is not a recent development, but rather a characteristic of the racial capitalist settler-colonial state of Israel. Occupied Palestine is entirely dependent on the Israeli occupiers. Palestinians are routinely denied access to basic health care by Israeli land confiscations and checkpoints. In the southernmost area of the Negev (Naqab), for example, over eighty thousand Palestinians have no access to emergency health care. The rapid spread of the corona virus in the West Bank led to a weakening of the Palestinian public health infrastructure due to Israel's withholding of revenues to the Palestinian

Authority (PA) and the austerity measures imposed on the PA by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Nithya 2020). Israel utilised the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to heighten military operations, surveillance methods, and electronic control mechanisms to advance the annexation of the Palestinian territories. By controlling the entry of medical equipment into the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel exacerbated Palestinian food insecurity and vulnerability to the virus. The situation was made worse by Israel's decision to withhold taxes and duties that were collected on behalf of Palestinians, resulting in financial hardships for numerous families in Gaza and the West Bank.

Moreover, Israel launched its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in December 2020 in a discriminatory manner. Despite securing eight million doses of the Pfizer vaccine, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were excluded. Shockingly, Israel delivered batches of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine deep into the West Bank for Jewish settlers, while Palestinians in the vicinity had to wait for extended periods. Additionally, the Israeli Public Security Minister instructed health officials not to vaccinate so-called security prisoners, all of whom are Palestinians (Breiner 2020). Because racial capitalism exploits and preys upon the 'unequal differentiation of human value', it runs counter-intuitively to scientific insights in containing the spread of COVID-19. Providing vaccines to only two-thirds of the population under Israeli control proved insufficient in fighting the spread of the virus (Karmi 2020).

Structured Racial Elimination

Palestine serves as a prime example of how racial capitalist settler colonialism operates to dominate a population and its land. A fitting comparison can be drawn to the conflicting policies of the US towards Japanese Americans during World War II. In California, the internment camps were a means to justify the confiscation of land and resources from individuals perceived as a threat, despite having no real connections to Japan. Conversely, this same rationale was disregarded for the Japanese American community in Hawaii, where they were allowed to reside and work in the fields despite being a US territory at the time (Daniels et al 1991).

We are witnessing a genocide of Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem with the aim of getting complete ownership of their lands and resources (e.g., full access to waterways, etc.). In essence, Palestinian victims of genocide are murdered to fulfill Israel's design for a new order (Fein 1984). Genocide is the consequence of the processes of state-led dispossession, an acceleration of annihilation with premeditated end goals. As we delineated, Israeli racial elimination and genocide in

Palestine progress through a series of oppressive policies namely apartheid, forced emigration, deportation, and murderous campaigns. Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem have not escaped this oppressive action during Israel's genocidal moment in Gaza, they are experiencing tightening control measures through economic and social forms of punishment and dispossession. Indeed, as al-Botmeh et al. note, 'though the West Bank has escaped the bombardment in this latest assault, the Israeli regime has nonetheless targeted the territory with a set of oppressive measures with grave economic consequences' (al-Botmeh, et al. 2024). Such measures include movement restrictions, delays in processing trade in goods and services, raids, and incursions to prevent Palestinians in Israel from accessing markets in the West Bank, as well as the pirating of Palestinian clearance revenues (import taxes). Israel's decision to withhold clearance revenues from the PA has had a significant impact on its limited ability to manage the West Bank's economy. Israel's restriction on Palestinian import taxes is a strategic move to prevent the establishment of a binational or independent state, ultimately hindering Palestinians from achieving self-governance. This limited control further contributes to the ongoing displacement of Palestinians from their land.

The PA's inability to effectively manage clearance revenues is due to the conflicting nature of having fiscal responsibilities without political autonomy, as outlined in the 1994 Paris Economic Protocol. With limited domestic tax revenue and heavy reliance on clearance revenues, the PA struggles to meet the needs of the West Bank population (al-Botmeh, et al. 2024). Without control over borders and few alternative revenue sources, the transfer of clearance revenues from Israel is crucial for maintaining the pretense of a functioning state. This arrangement is subjugation by design. Historically Palestinians lacked control over their import taxes, both before and after the 1993 Oslo Accords. From 1967 to 1994, when the Israeli military governed the West Bank and Gaza, Israel collected taxes on Palestinian imports and income (al-Botmeh, et al. 2024). These tax revenues were mainly used to support Israel, resulting in a system characterised by exploitative practices and minimal investment in the Palestinian population. The West Bank continues to be under Israeli occupation and the threat of racial elimination if its revenue structures remain closely linked to limited political sovereignty, preventing it from achieving full sovereignty.

Conclusion

Despite the extensive literature on Israeli oppression of Palestinians, including apartheid, illegal occupation, and the dehumanisation of Palestinian people, there is a lack of scholarly exploration of how

Palestinians are racialised within the framework of racial capitalism. We argue that racial capitalism provides valuable insights into understanding how the Zionist project has racialised the Palestinians, shedding light on Israel's racist and genocidal actions in Palestine. Palestinians, like other racialised groups, are marginalised, devalued, and often portrayed as terrorists rather than victims or freedom fighters. They are othered within a global system of racial capitalism, where the Global North not only ignores their suffering but also contributes to upholding oppressive structures that strip Palestinians of their land, resources, identity, and ultimately, their lives.

Examining Israeli apartheid and occupation through a racial capitalism lens provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Israeli racism, settler colonialism, and democracy-denial interlock with one another to dispossess and kill Palestinians. Without the racialization of Jews and Palestinians, the Israeli racial capitalism settler colonial state would not be possible. In this setting, the value of Palestinian life is both acknowledged and diminished as their actions and bodies are taken over, sensationalised, and degraded (Walcott 2021; Embrick and Williams 2019). Palestinian life is trapped in a recurring pattern of violent sensationalism. This violence further numbs Israelis to their common humanity with Palestinians. To resist this oppressive system, we must carefully dismantle the fictional and deceptive aspects of racialised Zionist settler colonialism.

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